IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 comprising about 0.1% to about 5%, by weight, of the aromatic carboxylic acid.

3. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 wherein the aromatic carboxylic acid has a pKa of about 2.5 to about 7.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 wherein the aromatic carboxylic acid is selected from the group consisting of salicylic acid, *o*-aminobenzoic acid, *m*-aminobenzoic acid, *p*-aminobenzoic acid, *o*-bromobenzoic acid, *m*-bromobenzoic acid, *o*-chlorobenzoic acid, *m*-chlorobenzoic acid, *p*-chlorobenzoic acid, 2,4-dihydroxybenzoic acid, 2,5-dihydroxybenzoic acid, 3,4-dihydroxybenzoic acid, 3,5-dihydroxybenzoic acid, ethylbenzoic acid, *m*-hydroxybenzoic acid, *p*-hydroxybenzoic acid, *o*-iodobenzoic acid, *m*-iodobenzoic acid, methyl-*o*-aminobenzoic acid, methyl-*m*-aminobenzoic acid, methyl-*o*-aminobenzoic acid, *o*-phenylbenzoic acid, isopropylbenzoic acid, and mixtures thereof

6. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 wherein the antimicrobial agent comprises salicylic acid, *m*-hydroxybenzoic acid, *p*-hydroxybenzoic, *o*-aminobenzoic acid, *m*-aminobenzoic acid, *p*-aminobenzoic acid, or a mixture thereof.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 wherein the hydric solvent comprises about 10% to about 35%, by weight, dipropylene glycol.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 wherein the hydric solvent further is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, isopropyl alcohol, n-butanol, n-propyl alcohol, ethylene glycol, propylene glycol, glycerol, diethylene glycol, tripropylene glycol, hexylene glycol, butylene glycol, 1,2,5-hexanetriol, sorbitol, PEG-4, and mixtures thereof.

12. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 wherein the hydric solvent further comprises isopropanol, ethanol, or a mixture thereof.

13. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 wherein the pH-adjusting compound is present in an amount of about 1% to about 5%, by weight, of the composition.

14. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 having a pH of about 2 to about 5.

15. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 wherein the pH-adjusting compound comprises sodium phosphate, sodium dihydrogen phosphate, disodium hydrogen phosphate, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, or a mixture thereof.

16. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim ~~1~~ 17 comprising:

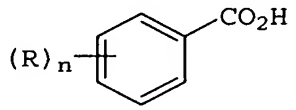
(a) about 0.2% to about 5%, by weight, of the aromatic carboxylic acid as the sole antimicrobial agent;

(b) about 10% to about 40%, by weight, of the hydric solvent;

(c) a sufficient amount of the pH-adjusting compound to provide a pH of about 2.25 to about 5.

17. (Currently amended) A method of reducing a bacteria population on a surface comprising contacting the surface with ~~a~~ an antimicrobial composition ~~of claim 1~~ for 30 seconds to achieve a log reduction of at least 3 against *S. aureus* or a log reduction of at least 3 against *E. coli*, wherein the antimicrobial composition comprises:

(a) about 0.1% to about 10%, by weight, of an aromatic carboxylic acid, wherein the aromatic carboxylic acid has a structure



wherein R, independently, is selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{1-4}alkoxy, amino, halo, phenyl, and benzyl; and n is 1 or 2;

(b) about 5% to about 50%, by weight, of a hydric solvent comprising dipropylene glycol, benzyl alcohol, or a mixture thereof;

(c) a sufficient amount of a pH-adjusting compound to provide a pH of about 2 to about 5.5; and

(d) a carrier comprising water,

wherein the aromatic carboxylic acid is the sole antimicrobial agent in the composition,

and the composition contains 0% to 0.2%, by weight, of a surfactant.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the composition achieves a log reduction of at least 3 against *S. aureus* and a log reduction of at least 3 against *E. coli*.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein a log reduction of at least 3 is achieved in a viral population.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the viral population comprises Rhinovirus 1A, Rhinovirus 2A, Rotavirus Wa, and mixtures thereof.

21. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the surface is a skin of a mammal.

22. (Original) A method of reducing a viral population on a surface comprising contacting the surface with a composition of claim 1 for 30 seconds to achieve a viral log reduction of at least 3.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein the viral population comprises Rhinovirus 1A, Rhinovirus 2A, Rotavirus Wa, and mixtures thereof.

24. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein the surface is a skin of a mammal.

25. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim 16 wherein the antimicrobial carboxylic acid comprises salicyclic acid.

26. (Currently amended) The ~~composition~~ method of claim 16 wherein the hydric solvent further comprises ethanol, isopropanol, or mixtures thereof.